

**External Consultant and Market Analysis Services / BNC  
Pre-Solicitation Conference (via WEBEX) August 26<sup>th</sup> , 2020  
RFQ No. 19MX56-20-Q-0009**

Notes

- Binational Center in Monterrey – henceforth referred to as “BNC”.
- Consultant (henceforth referred to as the “Vendor”)

**Q1. Can a proposal be quoted in US Dollars, if so under what instance?**

**A:** Yes, a proposal can be submitted in USD only if the vendor has a USD Bank account established in the company’s name.

**Q2. Per Section 2.1. Business Analysis and Recommendations:** Can a company/consultant ad/use its own methodology to present the analysis and recommendations on a wider scope.

**A:** Yes, the company can use its own methodology to present the analysis and recommendations per section 2.1 Business Analysis and Recommendation. The SWOT analysis is required as a specific deliverable, but the vendor is not limited to performing solely a SWOT analysis. .

**Q3. What is the SWOT Focus?**

**Is it primarily English teaching as mentioned on section 6.0 DELIVERABLES AFTER AWARD: “6.3 (1) or is it wholistic for all BNC activities?**

**A:** Focus should be wholistic to all BNC Activities. As stated in **2.1. Business Analysis and Recommendations (2.1.2 )** *Vendor shall perform a SWOT analysis (internal and external) to discuss the current BNC’s business model and make recommendations to make the BNC more agile and responsive to the current business environment, boosting its value, revenue, and sales.*

**The BNC in Monterrey is a non-profit organization that offers English Language courses for children, teens, and adults, English for business, and inclusive education**

Inglés ▾	División de Estudios Superiores ▾	Difusión Cultural ▾	Biblioteca Benjamín Franklin ▾
Inglés para Niños	Técnico Superior Universitario TSU	Sala Guajardo	Pagina Web Oficial
Inglés para Adolescentes	Licenciatura en la Enseñanza de la Lengua Inglesa LELI	Galería Leopoldo Carpintheyro	
Inglés para Adultos	Maestría en Estudios Literarios y Musicales MELM	Calendario	
Cursos Especializados ▾	Calendario		
Educación Inclusiva ▾			

**Q4. What payment methods apply to this project; are there specifics to consider based on the deliverables? Are there advance payments?**

**A: Per Federal Acquisition Regulations,** the U.S government is not allowed to pay in advance. Per the Prompt Payment Act, the U.S. government must pay a valid invoice within 30 days of accepting a good or service and a valid receipt. Should the U.S. government not comply with the Prompt Payment Act, the company may apply penalties in accordance with the Act.

**Q5. Can a bid/proposal be presented in U.S Dollars?**

**A:** Yes, It is possible to issue the proposal in U.S. dollars – but please consider the following:

1. Local Vendor /quoters can submit prices in U.S. dollars but will receive payments in local currency at the exchange rate in effect the day an invoice is processed for payment, if their bank accounts are established in Mexico.
2. Local Vendor/quoters can submit prices in U.S. dollars and receive payment in U.S dollars if their bank accounts are established in a United States bank.
3. US firms can submit prices and be paid in US dollars to a U.S. established bank account.

**Q6. Per Section 4. EVALUATON FOR CONTRACT AWARD: Vendor shall submit Five client referrals; is this limited to English Teaching Institutes or can referrals be presented from other than English-Foreign Language Institutes, such as German/French Teaching Institutes?**

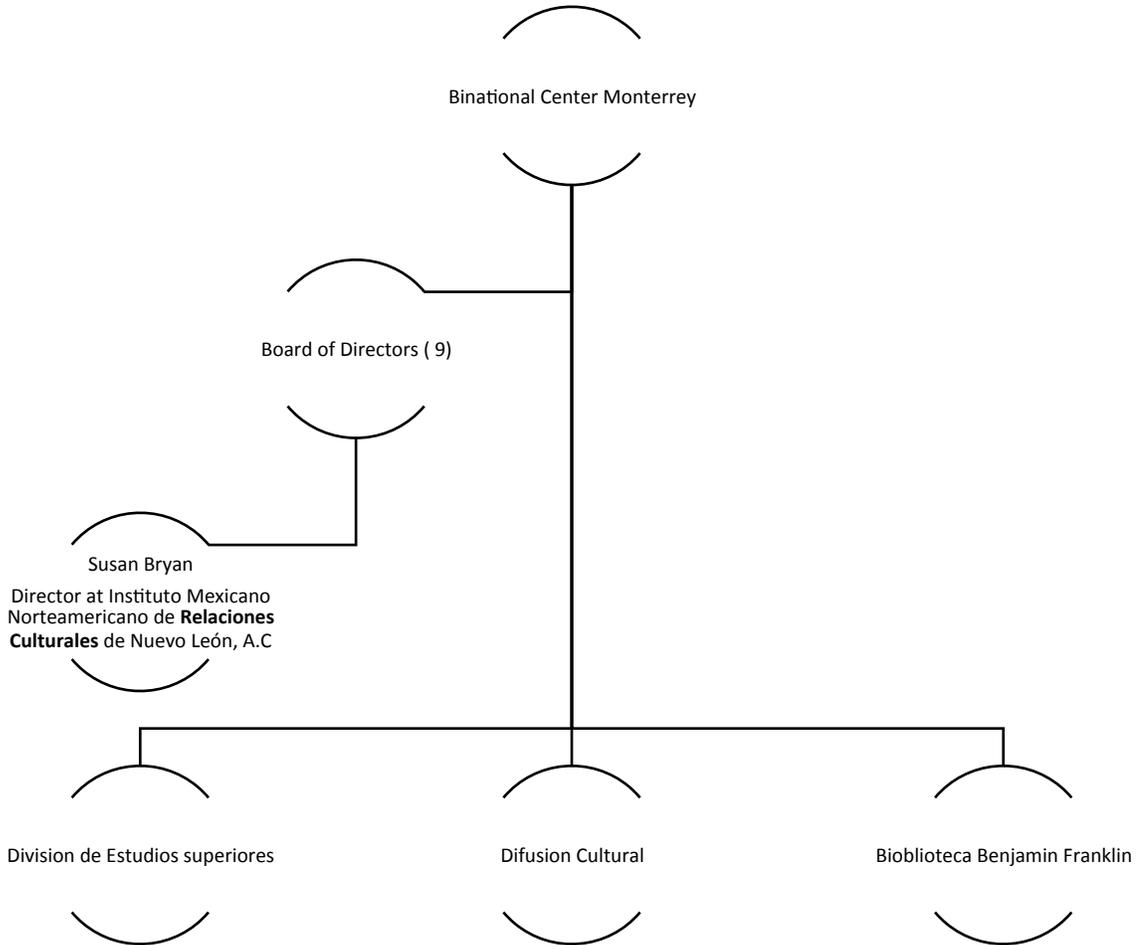
**A:** Three of the five client referrals should be from English instruction institutes. while 2 other cultural and language institutes may also be appropriate comparison

**Q7. Clarification requested Per Section 4. EVALUATON FOR CONTRACT AWARD: On part 4.1 -4.2** By a Sample business evaluation proposal is the BNC interested in receiving a business sample on a General approach on the presented scope of work or is the consulate looking for a literal sample of a business evaluation presented to previous clients.

**A.** A literal sample of a business evaluation is required. The sample can be an actual presentation prepared for another client or it can be a generic business evaluation.

**Q8. How is the BNC Organization look like?**

**A:** The Binational Center in Monterrey is:



Locations

CENTRO (Monterrey) /COLINAS (Cumbres) /ANÁHUAC (San Nicolás) /APODACA Plaza Altea (Centro Zapatero)

**Q9. How many people from the Organization structure will be interviewed?**

**A.** As many as necessary, including (required) the Director, Board of Directors, Heads of each division, and anyone else considered feasible.

**Q10. Is the BNC subject to Government Laws / Local or Foreign?**

**A:** No, the Binational Center is an NGO (non-governmental organization) which means it is a non-profit that functions independently of government. As a Language institute the BNC aligns to the SEP Secretaria de Educacion Publica and all Mexican laws that apply to “Asociaciones Civiles” and “donatarias”.

**Q11. To convey the required Analyses will the BNC provide files or needed material in Digital formats?**

**A:** Yes, the BNC is able to provide Digital Files to support this task. A Non-Disclosure agreement will be submitted by interested parties/vendors.

**Q12. Is there a Deliverables schedule for the milestones on the project?**

**A. Please refer to Section 2.4. Proposed Timeline 2.4.1** The contractor will begin its assessment on September 20, 2020 and conclude its assessment on **December 15, 2020**. It will present its findings to the Board on a mutually convenient date between Dec 15, 2020 to Feb 15, 2021.

**Q13. Is the Scope of the proposal limited to the Monterrey area as it relates to the competitive assessment and marketing/communications strategy?**

**A.** The strategy is not limited to the Monterrey Area ; the current physical locations of the BNC are in Nuevo Leon, Mexico.

**Q14. Who is the final client for this opportunity (solicitation) – is it the US Consulate or Relaciones Culturales?**

**A.** Final client is the Binational Center at Monterrey ( Relaciones Culturales).. in coordination with the U.S Government .

**Q15.Which organization would manage the invoicing for this project?**

**A.** Invoices must be sent to the U.S. Consulate for payment. The U.S. Consulate will confirm the BNC received the deliverable and it was acceptable prior to releasing payment.

**Q16.What is the current and targeted customer profiles ?**

**A.** The BNC teaches English as a Foreign Language to children from the ages of 7 to 12, classes for pre-teens and teenagers (ages 13 – 15) and classes for adults. English is taught on all levels of the European Common Framework of Reference for Language

Learning. We also have classes in Business English. All adult courses are registered with the SE of Nuevo Leon as “Capacitación para el Trabajo” and they have the corresponding RVOEs.

- B. The BNC also has a Bachelor’s Degree in Teaching English as a Foreign Language and a Master’s Degree in Literary and Musical Studies. Most of our students come from the middle class and upper middle class, many adults are young professionals and when a marketing study was done approximately 3 years ago, the average age was around 28 years old.

**Q17.Can an overview of the BNC sales cycle be provided?**

**Note: What have been the Center’s “Big Bets” or strategic focuses / investments in the last few years?**

- A. The BNC has focused on quality English language teaching with a huge effort made in certifying our teachers with an international certification issued by World Learning’s School of International Training (SIT). At present the “big bet” is on two types of distance learning. One is termed as **Relaciones Culturales Live** which are classes that are taught 100% by a teacher using specialized techniques for online teaching and the second one is **Relaciones Culturales Virtual** which involves the use of a license for an online platform from the U.S. in combination with a tutor who supports and holds an interactive class with small groups once a week. As far as the sales cycle is concerned, we can provide that information upon request, but we have registration open constantly throughout the year. We do not run on a semester or quarterly cycle. We feel that this helps us adapt rapidly to changing markets and we also provide payment plans for students

**Q18. Per Section 2.3 Optimization of internal operations part 2.3.1, “The vendor will analyze all available documents...” is mentioned. Will these documents be shared only upon starting the project engagement officially?**

- A. Documents will be shared to all interested parties/vendors who would like to participate and present a proposal for this solicitation.
- B. Please note Section 7. **COPYRIGHTS** , Any approved marketing materials become the sole property of the center for any purpose. The Contractor shall not retain any interests or rights. All information provided or generated is considered confidential and the property of the center.

**Q19.What does success look like in terms of revenue improvement, profitability improvement and improved value to the community/ Are there defined goals for these metrics?**

- A. This is currently under study due to the changing situation. The BNC has had to reduce personnel, locations, etc.

**Q20. How is customer satisfaction for the BNC measured currently?**

- A. Customer satisfaction is measured on a regular basis using inhouse surveys.

**Q21.Can you share the Center's Business Plan that is meant to be evaluated as part of the project?**

- A. A. Please refer to Section **1. Performance Work Statement** to fully review the goals of the solicitation therein, also refer to Section **4. EVALUATION FOR CONTRACT AWARD** to review all the submission requirements.

**Q22. Can the SF18 be shared in blank to fill and explanation on how to fill it be shared?**

- A. Yes. SF18 form in editable format can be shared and a guideline to fill it will be sent to participating parties/vendors.

**Q23.What new technologies does the BNC use?**

- A. The BNC uses online learning and before the pandemic used interactive whiteboards and internet access during the teaching process. The educational materials are professionally produced by international editors and they all have interactive components. As far as other areas of the center are concerned, the BNC has a professional recording studio, all types of materials for robotics and for computer coding, etc. These activities are in addition to our English Language Program. The BNC will also be adding a virtual reality component and will open a small video studio at a later date. The BNC has numerous programs that allow us to work with the local community in the area of STEAM.

**Q24.What means does the BNC use to communicate with its different targets?**

- A. At present, the BNC has found social media (Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, Twitter, etc.) to be most effective.

**Q25.Who has the BNC considered its competition in the last 3 years?**

- A. Harmon Hall, Quick Learning, Inglés Vivencial, among others (including international Online Learning Platforms such as Open English, English Town, etc.)

**Q26. How many students does the BNC have (children, adolescents, adults)?**

- A. This data changes each month. We are constantly in registration and we count registrations and not individual students.  
This year the BNC has had over 1,000 registrations per month.

**Q27. What services does the BNC offer (types of classes, services, agreements)?**

- A. A list of the BNCs current offer can be validated at <https://relacionesculturales.edu.mx/>
- English as a Language classes (kids-teenagers-adults)
  - Specialized English classes (Business English-Advanced abilities for communication-TOEFL preparation classes)
  - We collaborate with Instituto de la Juventud, Lengua Joven which is operated by the Government of the State of Nuevo Leon. This program is currently on hold.
  - We have contracts with companies for in-company classes (most of which are on hold at present due to company downsizing and budgetary constraints)

**Q28. What kind of studies have been done in the last three years?**

- A. The BNC has had a market survey three years ago and a Strategic Planning session with the Board of Directors and Coordinators

**Q29. Does the BNC has any market segmentation?**

- A. Unable to respond without follow up questions and information

**Q30. Per Section 2. Work Requirements /The first paragraph states that “the contract shall consist of the implementation of a market and business strategy”. For clarification, is this referring to the actual implementation of the market and business strategy, or to an implementation plan (as referred to in sub-section 2.2.3)?**

- A This is referring to an implementation plan, thanks for correcting.

**Q31. Considering the first proposal draft presented' Are the assigned consultants have to be the definitive ones or can there be a change (ex. Addition) once the granted is awarded?**

A. Per Section 4. EVALUATION FOR CONTRACT AWARD, the submission of proposal includes a Proposed consultant team including each team members resume per part 4.4.6. If this changes during the progress of the project after award, an update on the resumes must be presented.

**Q32. Under subsection 4.2, what's the expected scope for the summary of best practices for advertising and reaching new audiences on Mexican social media platforms?**

A. Best practices presented are considered part of the Business and Marketing analysis, which will allow us to review a detailed marketing plan and analyze the feasibility of the participating vendor in reaching new markets and succeed at reaching more revenue.

**Q33. Following the previous question, can the summary of best practices be presented within the proposal or it must be a part of the business and marketing plan?**

A. Best practices shall be presented as part of the Business and Marketing Plan, please refer to Section 4. EVALUATION FOR CONTRACT AWARD, to verify the submission requirements.

- 4.2 The sample Business and Marketing Plan must include a summary of best practices for advertising and reaching new audiences on Mexican social media platforms.
- 4.3 The sample Business and Marketing Plan submission may be provided in Word or PowerPoint.

**Q35. Is registering the Entity at SAM Account a requirement or is this process done once the grant has been awarded?**

**Q35.1 How and where can a Contractor Identification Number be created?**

**Q35.2 Is a Contractor Identification Number created per DUNS registration?**

A. Per FAR 4.1102 Policy -SAM registration is recommended for all vendors who seek to contract with the U.S. Government. However, SAM registration is REQUIRED for purchase orders at or in excess of \$30,000; therefore, SAM registration will be REQUIRED if the winning bid is in excess of \$30, 000.00 SAM .  
<https://www.acquisition.gov/far/4.1102>

B. **Note to Vendor** Registration can take several weeks to complete.